



### **U.S. National Arboretum to Reduce Public Visitation Hours**

Effective the week of May 13, 2013, the U.S. National Arboretum will implement cost-cutting and expenditure recovery measures, including closing the grounds of the Arboretum to the general public three days per week--Tuesday through Thursday--and reinstating some user and rental fees. Cumulative declines in appropriations over the past several years, including a 7.8 percent across-the-board budget cut arising from sequestration and rescission of 2013 appropriations in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service, of which the National Arboretum is a research location, necessitated the action.

In addition to abolishing critical, vacant positions, the U. S. National Arboretum will reduce operating costs by the mid-week closing of the grounds to the general public. This action will have the least impact on the core research functions of the National Arboretum while accommodating most Arboretum visitors and educational program participants. The vast majority of visits and almost all educational programs occur on weekend days. The Arboretum will suspend most recruitment and hiring, awards, and discretionary spending. In addition, it will reinstate recovery of user fees (janitorial, security, staffing) and space rental charges for use of space by outside organizations in the recently renovated Administration and Visitor Services Building and in selected gardens.

Cost recovery actions and other strategies to generate private revenues and non-appropriated funding to support National Arboretum public operations and special programs are consistent with a new Strategic Plan released in 2013. The plan reaffirms the National Arboretum's primary role of research and scientific discovery for environmental horticulture, particularly breeding of urban trees and shrubs, improved disease detection and pest and disease control for ornamental plants, and environmentally sound management of landscape plants. It also emphasizes the National Arboretum's role in maintaining and sharing genetic resources for horticultural science programs. The plan calls for expanding concession and contribution income in support of its public display garden function. The Strategic Plan guides the new operational procedures required in response to the recent substantial loss of appropriated funds.

/s/ Colien Hefferan, Director  
U.S. National Arboretum

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